

AN INVESTIGATION OF GROUP AND
ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

PROBLEM IN LIEU OF THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM, AND PROCEDURE

About a year and a half ago I became increasingly interested in exhibiting my work. Though I entered shows which were gratifying, I realized that more than occasional showing was necessary to develop the exhibition record I both needed and wanted. The most obvious opportunity an artist has to exhibit occurs with the many competitive exhibitions held annually. However, the vast majority of competitive exhibitions required that the work submitted be either matted or framed. Since my studio production had developed along non-traditional lines, my work suffered aesthetically from these traditional solutions of presentation. Therefore, I was forced to find another route to present my work to the public. I began to channel my efforts toward group and one-person exhibitions where I could establish the presentation policy my work required.

I, therefore, proposed as my creative investigation the preparations required of group and one-person exhibitions. The two group exhibitions were held in November and December of 1976. The two one-person exhibitions were planned for January and June, 1977. The latter show was also to be the culminating graduate exhibition required of my Master of Fine Arts degree.

The primary purpose of this investigation was to acquire information about the fundamentals of participating in group and one-person shows. The assumption was made that upon acquiring this basic information an understanding of the intricacies of the larger exhibition procedure could be attained. I proposed to investigate aspects important to the production, selection, and installation of my work in a formal gallery setting.

I exhibited works which were produced during graduate study and exhibited works produced specifically for the exhibitions. While selecting works for the exhibitions, I considered consistency and variety within the body of work. I was aware that the space would determine the total number of works shown. For each exhibition I considered the presentation of works for a specific space and considered lighting as a presentational device. I was aware that some unexpected events might occur before, during, and after each exhibition and, therefore, did not limit myself to discuss only the production, selection, and installation of my work.

In order to document the group and one-person exhibitions, I gathered data by keeping a journal. In addition, I documented the information with color slides. Since the majority of my work falls into three or four series, I have elected to document with color slides the concept of the direction, rather than each specific piece.

Definition of Terms

Terms given special meaning are listed and defined below.

1. Mutate - A procedure was utilized during studio production which altered and changed the original geometric format of a sheet of paper. This alteration resulted by hand tearing portions of the paper away from its geometric format. As a result, a decision was made to call this alteration of the paper's manufactured structure a mutation.
2. System - The entire body of work arranged in a permanent space became a network of interrelated parts which when manipulated successfully produced a cohesive effect, a unit, or whole within a given space.
3. Unit - Within a body of work some single works were selected and combined during installation. The single works were visually united as one work because of the small space maintained to separate each single piece. As a result, the single pieces functioned during the installation of a particular exhibition as parts to a more involved whole, better understood as a unit.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUR EXHIBITIONS

Previous to this investigation, I worked on a 30" x 40" format (slide 1). However, with the knowledge of my anticipation in the four shows, it became necessary to vary the scale of works produced in the studio. I noticed that one size used in an exhibition containing many pieces quickly becomes boring. As a result, the works installed in the four exhibitions ranged from 3" x 5" to 5' x 10'.

During an eight month period, I participated in group and one-person exhibitions of which a total of eighty-two pieces were selected and installed in the four shows. Of the eighty-two, thirty-four works were specifically produced for this investigation, and forty-eight were selected from work produced during graduate study. Seven pieces were selected and installed in three of the four exhibitions. Thirty works were selected and installed in two exhibitions, and the remaining pieces were installed only one time.

In the descriptions of the exhibitions, the mechanics, personalities, and consequences were new experiences for me. I have therefore emphasized these aspects a bit more than the studio procedure which did not vary appreciably during the investigation from the procedure of the last several years.

The Twenty-One Person Exhibition

My first participation was a twenty-one person exhibition. The show was held at 842 First Avenue in Dallas, Texas, from November 20 through November 27, 1976. The exhibition space was a large old building across from Fair Park. It was remodeled into a rental art space which provided local artists with an exhibition area of considerable size. Each of the twenty-one artists was allotted a fifteen foot wall area for the installation of their work.

The rental space was suggested by the student responsible for originating the exhibition when I was invited to participate. I was interested, quickly accepted, and the following week met with the originator and one other person to discuss the show. Not realizing the complexity of the situation, I became involved in selecting and inviting artists for the group exhibition. Instead of being only a participant, I became an originator without veto power.

During the meeting I suggested a theme regarding selection of artists and their works. Several ideas regarding a theme were discussed and quickly rejected. In fact, the idea of a theme was abandoned. The final procedure for selecting the artists to be included, unfortunately, resulted in friends inviting friends out of loyalty or returning a favor. Occasionally, an artist was invited because of his ability alone. A few weeks after the first meeting,

twenty-one artists were invited and agreed to show and share in the expenses of the exhibition at 842 First Avenue. Already irritated and confused over the unorganized and unprofessional criteria used in selecting the artists, I was not prepared for the disorder, irregular actions, and emotional climate that was to follow.

Throughout the preparation of the exhibition and while the exhibition was open to the public, the group was disorganized. The group selected for the show consisted of extremes in personalities, with different opinions regarding the purpose and function of the exhibition. The differences resulted in disagreements concerning every facet of the exhibition. These included the invitations, a date for the exhibition, an installation procedure, how to spend the left-over money, and who would sit or be responsible for the gallery during the exhibition week.

People began asking for a leader, but no one, including the person who initiated the group exhibition, wanted the responsibility. Therefore, a committee of six members volunteered to take responsibility for show preparation and to make some of the necessary decisions. Periodically before, during, and after the opening, people became alternately angered and concerned. With numerous problems resulting from negative human interaction, the show was installed and opened to the public on schedule.

While the preparations for the Dallas show were going forth, I was also continuing to develop pieces for my part of the exhibition. As irritating and frustrating as the show proved to be, the emotional climate appeared to have little effect on my creative work. I believed that, because more than enough good pieces already existed, the pressure of having to produce new work was effectively removed. Eleven works were installed in this exhibition. Four pieces were produced for graduate study, and the remainder produced specifically for the exhibitions.

Produced specifically for this investigation, "Letters One," "Letters Two," "Letters Three," "Letters Four," "Letters Five," and "Letters Six" made their first appearance in the twenty-one person exhibition. The six works were later installed in the one-person exhibition at Eastfield and the one-person M.F.A. exhibition. These works represented the first successful attempts to produce on a smaller scale. Each piece measured 8" x 8" (slides 2 and 3).

A new series of effects based on scale became apparent by working small. The threads that joined the torn stained shapes became a more important linear element. In relationship, the threaded line became much larger and obvious on the smaller format, producing a more tactile experience. At the same time the torn edges also appeared more aggressive on a small format which produced a pronounced three-dimensional effect. The result was a tactile, intimate

statement. The effects and methods of production of the six works stimulated thought and change for the upcoming studio investigation for the rest of the exhibitions.

In a previous meeting, procedures for the installation of all works produced by the twenty-one artists were discussed. It was decided that the fifteen foot wall area earlier agreed upon would be selected on a first-come-first-serve basis. This obviously meant that the artists who arrived early had priority in the placement of their work in a given area. With this information, I realized I had little control when considering the juxtapositions of my works to others. I, therefore, proceeded to select work as if exhibiting in a one-person show.

Approximately four weeks before the installation was to occur, I revisited 842 First Avenue to pay the group rental fees and sign a contract for the use of the space. During this time, I made visual observations and mental notes regarding the shape, size, and physical condition of the exhibition site. Using this information after I arrived at 842 on the designated evening for installation of work, I purposely avoided several areas. I avoided these areas because of lighting problems and insufficient viewing distance for art work.

Four nights before the opening I combined, arranged, and rearranged certain selected works on a fifteen foot wall in my studio. The fifteen foot area was visually intended

to accommodate several works as one cohesive system. Visual observations and decisions were made regarding variety and consistency within the total body of work. Variety was partially achieved by selecting three sizes with two grounds consisting of paper and canvas.

Consistency in my work was never a particularly serious problem in this exhibition. Consistency in my work was a result of the formal method of organizing design elements and organic shapes. The shapes were a constant throughout the production of studio work.

The body of work which was to be installed at the exhibition space was produced in such a manner that traditional presentational devices would have been detrimental to the effectiveness of each piece. During production, the presentation of each single piece was considered. Each piece intended for the exhibition had been hung with pins at the corners and loosely attached to the wall. Eleven single works were presented. During their installation, four single pieces were combined and arranged into one unit while six other single works were combined into another unit. One large piece involving three distinct but interrelated parts was also installed (slides 4 and 5).

The installation of the six works which measured 8" x 8" constitute the first consciously successful attempt to manipulate the pieces individually as well as parts of a larger unit. Their first presentation as a unit occurred

in this show when the works were placed adjacent to the other in a horizontal, rectangular format. During the installation, a one-inch space was maintained to separate each single piece, thus establishing a larger cohesive unit.

Unlike the other exhibitions, lighting my work in the twenty-one person show was not a problem. Five flood lights attached to a track on the ceiling evenly distributed the light across the eleven pieces. Lighting the pieces with flood lights produced a diffused, soft light for viewing the work.

The Three-Person Exhibition

Two weeks after the Dallas show closed, I participated in a three-person exhibition. The show opened on December 5, 1976, and lasted through the first week of January, 1977. In this instance, the location was a private gallery, The Farmers and Merchants Gallery. At one time the building was a bank in the downtown square of Pilot Point, Texas. The old building was something of a sociological phenomenon and was now used as a gallery in support of area artists. Upon entering the gallery, one is surrounded by a display of two- and three-dimensional work, some of which is on consignment by area artists, in addition to plants, antique furniture, and seating areas. Across from this space and the adjoining hall are the two rooms we used for our exhibition.

A friend and I had attended several openings at the Farmers and Merchants Gallery and became interested in exhibiting our two-dimensional work in the space. During the spring of 1976, we signed a contract with the gallery owner for an exhibition in December, 1976. Originally intended as a two-person exhibition, a third person working in ceramics asked to participate in the show. As a result a three-person exhibition containing both two- and three-dimensional art works opened in early December.

In comparison to the twenty-one person exhibition, the human factor in the three-person show was a mild experience. Only minor complications resulted in the decisions concerning the exhibition. Agreements came easily regarding the exhibition preparations, and the invitations and finances were arranged without incident.

For the exhibition I selected a total of thirty-seven pieces. Of the thirty-seven, sixteen were produced specifically for the exhibitions as part of my creative project. The remainder were works produced for graduate study. Four works were produced on canvas, and the remaining thirty-three utilized paper with a high rag content.

An important work produced for this investigation was "R. Jays Vest" which was installed in three of the four exhibitions (slide 6). It was my first conscious attempt to manipulate single works as interchangeable units. The production of "R. Jays Vest" began by placing three separate

rectangular paper sheets on a large table in the studio. A one-inch space was maintained to separate each of the three paper sheets. Each part containing two sheets were torn until desirable mutated forms resulted. Still maintaining a one-inch space, the altered paper parts were stained with an oil and turpentine solution. Pastels were applied, and a small canvas square was pinned to each paper part at a desirable location. The two paper sheets which comprised each part were then attached to each other with thread.

During this procedure, I unconsciously composed the three parts as one work. Though I intended each part to function as single works which could be interchanged according to the specific space, the three parts did not operate successfully when rearranged. Instead, they were successful only in the original fixed relationship. I realized that by maintaining a small space between each part during production prevented the possibility for new flexible arrangements. Therefore, I did not attempt this procedure in the studio again when interchangeable units were desirable. Functioning successfully as one work, a decision was made to title the three parts "R. Jays Vest."

When "R. Jays Vest" was completed, I attached the work to a white studio wall. The high contrast produced by the darker pieces on the white wall emphasized the torn, mutated edges of the parts and made me aware of the effect

installation was to have on my work. This realization was to become a conceptual aid to me during future studio production.

The previous experience in selecting works for the Dallas exhibition gave me vital information to use during the selective process in the three-person show. In Dallas I selected a specific number of works for an inflexible arrangement on a fifteen foot wall. In the three-person show at Pilot Point, instead of selecting a specific number, I selected more than was required for installation, so that the most effective work in the most effective arrangement could be presented. Fifty works were selected at the studio for consideration, but only thirty-two pieces were finally selected during installation. Having the opportunity to combine, arrange, and rearrange the single pieces made it possible to avoid the inflexible situation I experienced during the installation of the twenty-one person exhibition. Knowledge of the shape and approximate size of the exhibition spaces at the Farmers and Merchants Gallery affected my decision to select several different sizes. Work which was selected varied from 3" x 5" to 4' x 8' and some pieces were arranged into units during installation.

Unlike the twenty-one person exhibition, a specific area for each artist was not a consideration for the group members in the three-person show. Instead, all of the work produced by the three artists were arranged in all of the

gallery spaces (slides 7-11). On the first evening, installation of the flat works occurred, and the next day the third person arrived and installed the ceramics. Afterwards, some of the two-dimensional pieces already installed were rearranged, and an environmental construction was installed in one corner.

Due to the physical condition of the old walls in the exhibition space, difficulty was encountered in the presentation of the flat pieces. Time was spent attempting to resolve and cover the walls which were in extremely poor condition. This was done primarily by the placement and installation of work over the damaged wall areas. Another problem resulted because the walls were made of concrete and plaster. When nails were driven into the walls, the plaster crumbled or cracked. All of the problems concerning the walls required creative and somewhat inventive solutions to install the work. Staples, pins, small and large nails, and a variety of adhesive tapes were used to attach the work to the walls of the Farmers and Merchants Gallery. Of the thirty-seven pieces selected for the exhibition, twenty-eight were directly attached to the wall with pins and small nails. In some instances two-way tape was also applied to the back of the piece and thereby attached to the wall. Nine pieces were mounted on a cream board and framed for the exhibition.

The work being produced in the studio at this time

moved into a new direction. Subtle value areas within the format were no longer the emphasis. A stronger contrast, range of lights to darks, were now important. This enabled my work to reach a stage where traditional presentation by framing could be utilized effectively without aesthetic damage to the piece presented. The earlier work produced previous to the investigation was so subtle and restricted in contrast that framing or other formal presentational devices destroyed the piece.

In the Farmers and Merchants Gallery, lighting the work required a sunny day and two antique floor lamps. Several windows in each room resulted in natural lighting. The hall area, however, had no available light source. Two group members discussed this problem and agreed that the work to be installed in the hall would be arranged to make the flaws in the wall less conspicuous. At the same time, the works installed in the hall visually became a part of the exhibition and aided in producing a cohesive exhibition.

The One-Person Exhibition at Eastfield

The procedures for preparing and contracting a space for a third exhibition began one day in February, 1976, with a slide presentation of my work at Eastfield College. In presenting the slides to several instructors and students of the art department, I discussed and answered questions concerning my work, hoping to secure a one-person show in

the gallery. A month later I was notified of acceptance and was instructed that further arrangements regarding a specific time would be mailed during the summer. Upon confirmation of the date in September, 1976, I was also invited to present a one hour lecture relative to my work which would coincide with the exhibition.

Unlike the twenty-one person and three-person exhibitions, the preparation for this show was done in a highly professional manner. Before, during, and after the show opened, I was treated with respect, which I found to be emotionally rewarding. The financial remuneration was also worthwhile. Though it was a minimal sum, I was paid as a visiting artist.

The exhibition opened on January 17 and lasted until January 28, 1977. It was held in a teaching gallery at Eastfield College in Dallas, Texas, and was my first one-person exhibition. Due to selection and installation compromises necessitated by group exhibitions, I was particularly excited to have the sole responsibility of this exhibition. I also looked forward to the installation of the work because it offered the opportunity to test my ideas of organization within a given space without regard to sharing with others.

The exhibition area at Eastfield College was previously a storage room for student paintings which was converted into a gallery for instructional purposes. The space

consisted on one long, narrow room with a low ceiling and track lighting which was installed along with independently controlled fluorescent light fixtures. It was my first involvement in a fresh, immaculate exhibition space, the walls of which were sheetrocked and freshly painted white. Highly polished brown linoleum was used on the floor. The clean space made installation easier in comparison to the previous gallery show, but I encountered difficulty during installation because of the extremely long and narrow proportions of the room.

For this exhibition, I selected thirty-three works for installation in the given space. Of the thirty-three, twenty-one were produced specifically for the exhibitions. The remaining twelve pieces were produced for graduate study.

Installed in the one-person exhibition at Eastfield were works where I intended to have a mutated or irregular format. I was dissatisfied with the format and decided to place each of the pieces on a 10" x 10" sheet of white paper (slides 12 and 13). The geometric shape of the white paper under the irregular shape of the actual piece accomplished two things. The first effect was to stabilize the irregular format - to play the irregular shape against the geometric white shape. The second, and perhaps more important effect was to introduce significant amounts of white to the total piece. It was the first time that I used pure, unaltered white paper in my work since the beginning of my graduate

studies.

Soon after the production of the 10" x 10" works, I produced several works measuring 3" x 5" which resulted in a new direction in studio production (slides 14 and 15). Stained paper from previous production was torn to create desirable shapes for a white 3" x 5" geometric format. I discovered that tearing and pulling the previously stained papers toward me resulted in a white edge. If a white edge was not desired, I tore and pushed the paper away from me. Using a collage procedure to create shapes with and without white edges, I selected, placed, and overlapped the torn shapes until the desired composition was achieved. Influenced by the 10" x 10" works produced previously, I placed the shapes on a white format. By allowing white areas along the exterior of the format and white lines defining and surrounding the shapes, I produced for the first time a broad range of lights to darks within my works.

Five days elapsed between the closing of the three-person exhibition at Pilot Point and the installation of the one-person show at Eastfield College. I was interested in installing works produced on paper and selected over fifty pieces for consideration. Final selection with regard for consistency and variety occurred during installation. In the selective process, the number and size of works installed was determined by the gallery itself. Because the exhibition

space was long and narrow, effective viewing of large works was difficult. Therefore, with the exception of three pieces, I selected thirty-three single works which did not exceed 15" x 20." All the works were recent with the exception of one which was produced six months before the exhibition. I selected "Friday Night on P. P. Square" because it functioned as a visual representation of a previous direction (slide 16). It also gave variety to the exhibition, but was consistent with the other works selected regarding the use of materials.

Installation began on a Friday morning, January 14, 1977. As I walked into the gallery, I was instructed by a faculty member to install the work in four hours. At the same time, two work-study students were assigned to assist me. The students' presence and numerous questions made me nervous, so I asked them to leave.

Walking into a clean, white, long and narrow room, I was not quite sure where to begin. Therefore, I sat in the middle of the room and became familiar with the space. I arranged and rearranged works on the floor until the works functioned effectively in the given space. Of the thirty-three pieces installed, presentation arrangements of seven units resulted. In total the seven units contained thirty single works. The remaining three works were presented as single pieces. The works were placed closely together in a horizontal position. To separate the seven units and three

single pieces from each other, large wall spaces were maintained. In presenting the thirty-three works, both framed and loose works were presented in the exhibition (slides 17-19).

During installation, I worked under independently controlled fluorescent light fixtures. As a result, I was unaware of the potential problems of both floods and spots on the work. Because I was short of time, I made arrangements with an instructor in the department who volunteered to take care of lighting.

A week later I walked into the gallery and was greatly disappointed by the effect of the entire show caused by the lighting of certain works. The use of spots caused uneven light distribution. On the back wall of the exhibition space, the visual impact of one large work was particularly affected by hot spots or blotchy lighting. As a result of this experience, I became aware of the effect light distribution has on the aesthetic quality of an exhibition.

The One-Person M.F.A. Exhibition

The fourth exhibition was a one-person Master of Fine Arts qualifying show which opened on June 6, 1977, and lasted through June 10, 1977. It was held at the North Texas State University Art Gallery in Denton, Texas. Unlike the other three shows, the North Texas Gallery was built specifically for exhibition purposes. The gallery area was

an open space which could be sectioned off with movable panels. The walls were covered in an easily cleaned, durable vinyl which gave the appearance of a loosely woven fabric, similar in texture to linen. Lighting in the gallery was limited to track and bank lights.

The exhibition preparation began by contacting the gallery director to reserve space for a spring show. My preference for a one-person M.F.A. exhibition became a problem because the space for graduate shows usually required two or three people. I discussed the problem with the gallery director and was informed the space was available in the summer. As a result, I was able to obtain dates which would permit a one-person show.

I anticipated the event for some time. It was the last exhibition of the creative investigation, the largest and finest space for installation of work, and it was my M.F.A. graduate exhibition. I also looked forward to the installation of this show because it offered me the opportunity to test the knowledge acquired from the first three exhibitions.

Several months ago I channeled my efforts towards group and one-person shows, although the chronological order and dates of the exhibitions were unplanned. The first three shows occurred within a two-month period with the fourth show opening six months later. During this six-month period, I had the opportunity to produce a new body of work from which new directions resulted.

One of the first directions can be evidenced in the work "Occasionally Red Will Meet Blue" (slide 20). Measuring 30" x 35," it was produced specifically for the exhibition. Just previous to the production of the work, I began working on a larger scale, but was unsatisfied with the results. I lost the desired effects I had created when working on a 3" x 5" format. When working on a small format, a range of lights to darks resulted. In order to acquire a similar effect in "Occasionally Red Will Meet Blue," I outlined and emphasized torn shapes with pastels. While establishing the shapes, I realized the importance and excitement of color as it was evolving in my work.

Soon after the production of "Occasionally Red Will Meet Blue," several pieces were produced where color and form became obviously more important than surface textures. After the paper was torn and layered, I emphasized the torn shapes by outlining with multiple lines of intense pastel colors (slides 21 and 22). With this accomplishment I began the production of "The Spaces Are The Tents," which measured 5' x 10' (slide 23). It was the largest work I had ever produced in the studio. It was also my first attempt since undergraduate school to create desirable organic forms by the direct application of paint to a flat paper surface. I prepared and preserved the paper with an acrylic medium; and, as a result, the pastels used in the previous works did not adhere to the acrylic base. After I stained the paper with

an oil and turpentine solution, I outlined, distinguished, and created organic forms with pure unaltered oil color.

During the production of "The Spaces Are The Tents," I produced several works on stretched canvas. "Colored Mercury Bumper," which measured 4' x 4,' was produced for the exhibition (slide 24). It was the first successful attempt to manipulate the thick application of primarily intense colors on a stretched canvas.

Over fifty works were selected in the studio as possibilities for installation. However, only thirty-eight pieces were installed. Though movable panels could have been used and additional works selected, I decided to leave an open space to allow effective viewing of the color works (slides 25 and 26).

I selected eighteen works from those which were produced for graduate study, and selected twenty pieces which were produced specifically for the creative investigation. Because major changes in the work took place, consistency within the body of work became a real concern for the first time. In order for the show to function as one cohesive system, I realized the specific placement of the single works and their combined relationships would be an important concern and would require special attention during installation.

Installation began on Friday, June 3, 1977. Over fifty pieces were carried to the installation site. Saturday morning I arranged the works on the floor until desirable

combinations occurred. When I arranged the works on the floor, I had placed the intense color works next to the collage works. As a result, abrupt changes took place which caused visual distractions from the works themselves. Therefore, I used the corners of the gallery as a natural division or boundary which separated the intense color from the collage works (slide 25). At the same time the only three neutral, colorless pieces in the exhibition were isolated in a corner near the entrance (slide 27).

Observations made from the color slides of the third exhibition resulted in a dissatisfaction with the units containing four to seven single works. The selected works for a particular unit were closely interrelated because of the organization of design elements; and, because each part was the same size, the units became too repetitive. The units lacked the variety necessary for a successful composition. Therefore in this exhibition I combined only two single works of the same scale to produce a successful unit.

At the same time, the placement of some of the units distracted from each other. I had installed small units next to extremely large units. As a result, an abrupt change in scale occurred. The large scale had the tendency to dominate the smaller scale. Because of this, the works installed in this exhibition were placed in a progressive manner on the two walls of considerable length. On the left wall as you enter the gallery, the works were installed

progressively from large scale to small scale then back to large scale. On the opposite wall, the works progressed from small to large (slides 28, 26, and 29).

Besides presenting the individual pieces in interchangeable units, I presented single works utilizing five presentational devices. The color collage paper works were framed by natural wood molding. The molding was protected by a Danish wood oil. Lattice strips were used to float the glass enabling the three-dimensional quality in the work to function effectively to its fullest capability.

During the production of the stretched canvas pieces, I became concerned with the second method of presentation. A decision was made to extend the painted image onto the two-inch sides. I considered framing the canvas works with a natural wood molding. However, I felt that the color would operate more effectively without a frame.

The third presentational device required that I use push pins to attach loose paper works directly to the gallery walls. One 4' x 8' collage paper work was framed without glass using a natural wood molding, and six smaller paper works were mounted flush to wrapped canvas stretchers.

The lighting of this exhibition depended on both bank and track lighting. Eleven bank lights were burned out; and, as a result, even distribution with track lighting was necessary in some areas. At the same time, the lighting in each corner of the gallery became a visual concern, and

both floods and spots were used to increase the lighting in the four corners. Even light distribution produced a visually balanced effect throughout the exhibition space.

During the installation of work in this exhibition, I again realized the importance of lighting as a presentational and a compositional device. When used properly, lighting contributes to the success of an exhibition.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this investigation was to investigate aspects important to the production, selection, and installation of my work in a formal gallery setting. However, as I participated in the four shows, the mechanics of preparation and the associations with numerous personalities in the profession also became important and contributed valuable information for the investigation.

In gathering information, I had intended for the journal to function as valuable documentation. However, what occurred was random, sporadic, and poetic notations. Under these circumstances, little written data was applicable when describing the aspects of production, selection, and installation. Some of the experiences were so important that they remained very vivid even without the aid of a journal. Instead, the most valuable method for documentation resulted from the slides taken of individual works and the four installations. Over four hundred slides were taken during the course of this investigation. The slides influenced certain decisions which were made during the exhibitions. After each show I was able to view the problems and successes of each installation more objectively with slides. The visual method of documentation became extremely

beneficial and affected certain decisions during studio production.

The works produced in the studio moved in several directions during the course of this investigation. The first change was evidenced when I decided to vary the scale of works produced in the studio. Previous to my involvement in the investigation, I produced work on a 30" x 40" format. However, when preparations for the exhibitions began, I realized the success of an installation was partially determined by variety within a selected body of work. With this information and from my experience with the first exhibition, I discontinued the potentially disadvantageous habit of working in one size. Instead, works ranged from 3" x 5" to 5' x 10' over an eight-month period of production.

By working in several sizes the shift from one size to another stimulated several other directions in the work. Previous to the investigation, the works contained a subtle range of neutral grays; but, as I became involved in the functions of the exhibitions, a greater concern for color and form evolved. Eventually this concern stimulated a change in the use of materials. Working on paper and using a collage procedure, as in the first three exhibitions, eventually evolved to the use of a stretched canvas surface for the last showing of my work. During this prolific period, accelerated changes in my work occurred because of my intense involvement in the four exhibitions.

Numerous works were produced during an eight-month period. Specifically, eighty-two pieces were selected and installed in the four exhibitions, thirty-four were produced for the exhibitions, and forty-eight were selected from works produced for graduate study. Seven pieces were selected and installed in three of the four exhibitions, and thirty works were selected and installed in two exhibitions. The remaining pieces were installed only one time.

During studio production a selection procedure occurred. If a collage work on paper being produced in the studio was not functioning effectively, the torn, stained papers were disassembled and used in later production. A second procedure was used prior to installation. Several works were selected as a consideration for showing. However, final selection took place at the exhibition site. The method I used for selection in the first exhibition promoted the decision to select works in the studio only as a consideration for installation. I had created an inflexible situation by selecting only the specific number of works to be installed in the specific space at 842 First Avenue. I realized the selection of work was largely determined by the size and shape of the installation site. The body of work selected for installation was chosen with regard for consistency and variety. At the specific space I arranged and combined single works into several units and rearranged and combined the single works into new units in another space.

In the first three exhibitions I presented units containing several pieces of the same scale placed closely together and repeated in a horizontal or vertical position. Later observations made me realize the units involving several works of the same size became too repetitive. Therefore, a decision was made to present works of the same scale, only in twos, during the fourth installation.

The presentation of single works was effected by the changes which occurred during studio production, and at the same time I became more concerned in the presentation of the works being produced in the studio. In the first installation one presentational device was utilized. Approximately eight months later I utilized five presentational devices for the fourth exhibition. The earlier works produced previous to the investigation were so subtle and restricted in contrast that framing or other traditional presentational devices destroyed the aesthetic quality of the piece. However, during the course of the investigation, studio production moved in several directions. Subtle value areas within the format were no longer the emphasis and thereby enabled me to utilize some traditional presentational devices.

From the experience of installing in four exhibitions, I realized the importance of lighting in a gallery space. When used properly, lights function as another presentational device. When lighting is improperly used, it can destroy the art statement.

Specific selections of works produced in the studio and their installation in four unique permanent structures produced four varied, but effective, exhibitions. I had the opportunity to test my ideas of organization in each of these spaces. The first opportunity occurred at 842 First Avenue in Dallas, Texas. The works selected for this space included the works of twenty-one artists. The methods for selecting these artists and the methods for preparing and installing the exhibition were emotional and educational experiences. In comparison to the other exhibitions, one obvious disadvantage was the difficulty of twenty-one artists making decisions. In this particular exhibition, no one wanted the responsibility of preparation. As a result, the decision-making process became time consuming and inconclusive. Even with all the problems resulting from the participation of twenty-one people, the exhibition served my intended function. I had the opportunity to exhibit my works in a gallery setting with other individuals.

The second exhibition was a three-person show. Compared to the twenty-one person exhibition, this show was a mild experience. The members of the small group show made decisions quickly concerning exhibition preparations and installation of works. The exhibition was held in two small rooms and a long connecting hall of the Farmers and Merchants Gallery in Pilot Point, Texas. The poor physical condition of the permanent structure presented a major challenge when

we attempted to install the paintings.

The third show was a one-person exhibition at Eastfield College in Dallas, Texas. I found it to be an advantage over group shows in that I had full responsibility. I intended the exhibition to function as one cohesive system involving both single works and interchangeable units. The exhibition space was long and narrow; therefore, selection became an important concern during this exhibition.

The fourth show benefited from the valuable experiences acquired during the previous exhibitions. The one-person M.F.A. exhibition was held in the North Texas State University Art Gallery in Denton, Texas. This exhibition opened six months after the third exhibition. During that time several changes occurred in studio production which created a concern for consistency within the selected body of work. As intended, the exhibition functioned successfully as one system. The installation of the fourth exhibition reflected the application of knowledge acquired from the first three exhibitions. The outcome was a cohesive, yet varied, show.

Previous to this creative investigation, I viewed an exhibition space as a receptacle. The space creates the opportunity for artists to exhibit their work. However, with the expansion of my sensibilities, I realize the exhibition site can also function as an environment when the installed works are manipulated to interact with the given space. With this increased sensibility, I was able to view

my work as potential parts to an environment. In the book, Great Western Salt Works, I can better appreciate Hans Hacke's statement that

A "sculpture" that physically reacts to its environment is no longer to be regarded as an object. The range of outside factors affecting it, as well as its own radius of action, reach beyond the space it materially occupies. It thus merges with the environment in a relationship that is better understood as a "system" of interdependent processes. These processes evolve without the viewer's empathy. He becomes a witness. A system is not imagined, it is real.¹

Though I will continue to participate in group and competitive exhibitions, I particularly look forward to one-person exhibitions. This preference will enable me to control and manipulate my work throughout the entire space with the fewest compromises. The one-person exhibition will allow me the opportunity to experiment with non-traditional installation procedures necessary for an environment to have visual impact.

The intense involvements in four exhibitions became a valuable experience. During an eight-month period personal realizations were manifested. Acquiring a better understanding of self in turn heightened my perception towards my work and the world around me. In the book, Icon and Idea, Herbert Read supports my conviction when he states:

¹Jack Burnham, Great Western Salt Works, (New York, 1974), p. 22.

Art, in my opinion, has remained a key to survival. However much it may have been smothered in false idealism and intellectual sophistication, it is still the activity by means of which our sensation is kept alert, our imagination kept vivid, our power of reasoning kept keen. The mind sinks into apathy unless its hungry roots are continuously searching the dark sustenance of the unknown, its sensitive foliage continuously stretching towards unimaginable light. The mind's growth is its expanding area of consciousness, and that area is made good, realized, and presented in enduring images, by a formative activity that is essentially aesthetic.²

²Herbert Read, Icon and Idea, (New York, 1965), p. 32.

APPENDIX

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. "Gray Flannel"
2. "Letters Three"
3. "Letters Five"
4. Twenty-One Person Installation
5. Twenty-One Person Installation
6. "R. Jays Vest"
7. Three-Person Installation
8. Three-Person Installation
9. Three-Person Installation
10. Three-Person Installation
11. Three-Person Installation
12. "Worms on Edge"
13. "Red Worms on Edge"
14. "View of Thirty-Seven Blue Sheep #5"
15. "View of Thirty-Seven Blue Sheep #2"
16. "Friday Night on P.P. Square"
17. One Person Eastfield Installation
18. One Person Eastfield Installation
19. One Person Eastfield Installation
20. "Occasionally Red Will Meet Blue"
21. "Paper Dolls Unfolded"
22. "Exerts"
23. "The Spaces Are The Tents"

- 24. "Colored Mercury Bumper"
- 25. One Person M.F.A. Installation
- 26. One Person M.F.A. Installation
- 27. One Person M.F.A. Installation
- 28. One Person M.F.A. Installation
- 29. One Person M.F.A. Installation































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TO THE PRESENT TIME



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